

April 15, 2008

## **Opening Statement of Congressman Todd Akin,**

### ***Subcommittee Hearing on the Defense Travel System***

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO), the ranking Republican on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, released the following opening statement for the subcommittee's hearing on the Defense Travel System (DTS):

"Today's hearing raises a new subject for this subcommittee—the Defense Travel System. While this topic may appear mundane, you get a sense of this program's importance when you take into account the numbers involved.

"Currently the Department of Defense's travel enterprise comes at an annual cost of \$12 - 13 billion. DTS was designed to improve how the Department manages travel by modernizing travel processes, maximizing efficiencies and lowering costs. Unfortunately it took too long for the program to stand up and run effectively. I hope that the days of being behind schedule and cost overruns are past us. My understanding is that DTS is much improved, and that the Department has begun to reap the benefits it sought from the program back in 1998.

"This is not to say all is fine; DTS still faces challenges. The first is usability. Making DTS a user friendly portal for booking and collecting travel reimbursements were two of the primary reasons this Committee required the Department to have a Federally Funded Research and Development Center study DTS. This initiative resulted in the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) study that made a series of recommendations on improving the system, but fell short of recommending an overhaul of DTS. I'd like to hear from the Department on their progress in implementing the IDA recommendations.

"For this program to be successful it needs to support its users. The subcommittee had an

opportunity to meet with Department users, so we have a sense of the burden an inefficient, cumbersome travel system can be to DOD personnel.

"Finally, it is my understanding that there are over 60 legacy travel systems in place in the Department, which essentially compete with DTS. This comes at an estimated cost of \$1 billion dollars annually. For DTS to truly succeed it needs to replace these legacy systems. I would like our witnesses to address how the Department plans to attack this problem."